

BELOW THE BASEMENT

by  
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INT. CRAWL SPACE - LATER

It's PITCH BLACK. Nothing can be seen, only someone's panicked breathing. This unseen person reaches for a lighter and sparks it a few times before it finally ignites. Behind the flame we see JASON. He searches around him, terrified, engulfed by blackness.

JASON  
Are you okay?

Someone else coughs, choking on dust.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Mike, are you okay?

The other person is finally able to talk.

MIKE  
I'm here. Hold on.

MIKE coughs a few more times, clearing his throat.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
Was that what I think it was?

Jason, still illuminated only by his lighter, searches for an answer.

JASON  
I think so. You alright?

MIKE  
Oh yeah, it's just dusty. Isn't there a light switch over there?

JASON  
I tried it but there's no power.

Mike trips over a pile of stuff, making a huge racket.

JASON (CONT'D)  
You okay?

MIKE  
(annoyed)  
Found the camping gear.

Jason moves out of position towards Mike.

MOMENTS LATER

The sounds of a lantern fumbling around in someone's hand can be heard.

JASON  
Would you just let me light it?

MIKE  
Dude, give me a second.

Suddenly two overhead lights flicker on, illuminating Jason and Mike. Jason, the clean cut older brother is in his 20s. Mike is just a few years younger and has the permanent smirk of a trouble maker.

Mike is sitting on the floor holding the lantern, while Jason is hunched over him. They look at the lights, relieved.

JASON  
Alright, well that's a good sign.

MIKE  
Seriously...this thing's a pain in the ass.

Mike looks around the crawl space. There's a large shelf on the left side and one in the back, leaving the two brothers stuck to the right. The shelves are stuffed with boxes, old computers, and holiday decorations. Jason notices the old stuff.

JASON  
Look at all this shit.

Mike jokingly punches him in the shoulder.

MIKE  
(half joking)  
Hey man. This is all we got.

JASON  
Yeah, great.

Jason smiles at his brother and holds out his fist.

JASON (CONT'D)  
I'm glad you're alright.

Mikes chuckles and gives Jason a fist bump.

MIKE  
Can't get rid of me that easily.

Mike turns to the entrance of the crawl space and heads towards it.

JASON  
What are you doing?

Mike stops, confused.

MIKE  
I'm gonna check outside.

JASON  
I don't think that's a good idea.

MIKE  
Why?

JASON  
Because...what about radiation and stuff?

Mike is visibly worried.

MIKE  
Ok. So are we just gonna hang out?

Jason is unsure.

JASON  
I think so. I mean...the power's back on. This is a suburban neighborhood. There's gonna be search parties going through houses soon. Don't you think?

MIKE  
Let's hope so.

Jason looks at the wall beside them where two lawn chairs hang.

HOURS LATER

The two brothers sit in the lawn chairs, bored out of their mind. Jason is twirling his hair, daydreaming. Mike has found a "Worst Case Scenarios" board game and is reading through the cards.

Mike finds one of the cards interesting and reads it to Jason.

MIKE

Did you know if you get attacked by a shark, you should fight it? The shark will eventually give up and look for easier pray.

He flips the card and looks at the back.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Wow...I didn't know that.

Jason is still daydreaming.

JASON

Does it say anything about a nuclear bomb?

Mike is still reading the back of the card.

MIKE

I was looking for that, but didn't see anything...Man can you imagine fighting a shark?

He puts the card back in the box.

MIKE (CONT'D)

So you think that's what it was?

Jason looks at Mike and shrugs.

JASON

It sounded big enough--

MIKE

Man...that can't be good.

JASON

Yeah, no shit.

Mike sees another card and laughs.

JASON (CONT'D)

What?

MIKE

If you get stung by a jelly fish you should pee on the wound.

JASON

(aggravated)

Dude, this is some serious shit.

MIKE

What do you want me to do about it?

Jason sighs, frustrated.

JASON

I don't know. It's just...

Jason realizes there's nothing they can do.

JASON (CONT'D)

I don't know, but dude, everyone knows you're supposed to pee on a Jelly Fish wound.

MIKE

I didn't.

Jason takes the card.

HOURS LATER

Jason and Mike are sitting on the floor playing the game competitively and having a fun time. They have gathered some items from the area and are using them for gambling.

Jason wins a turn.

JASON

Boo ya! Fork it over.

He gestures toward a rubber chicken.

MIKE

Dude, not the rubber chicken.

Mike holds up an old tape player.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Here, take my Walkman circa '1993. I'm sure there's an incredible Paula Abdul tape in there, or you could listen to the radio...

They stop in their tracks and look at each other with the exact same thought.

Mike scrambles to unwrap the headphones and plug them in. When he does, he flips the switch and twirls the frequency knob. He holds up the earphones so both he and his brother can hear.

JASON  
Switch it to AM--

MIKE  
Shhhh!

Mike carefully spins the knob until he finally hears something.

JASON  
Right there--

MIKE  
I know, shhhh!

He turns it up and a recorded message comes through radio static.

RADIO  
...System. This is not a test. If there are any survivors in the Denver Metro area, there will be an organized evacuation at the Swedish Medical Center on Wadsworth Boulevard and West Bowles Avenue in Littleton.

MIKE  
Dude that's like two blocks from here.

JASON  
Shhh!

RADIO  
All evacuations will end in...three...hours. No future evacuations have been planned. Once again, all evacuations will end in...three...hours. No future evacuations have been planned...This is the emergency broadcast system. This is not a test. If there are...

Jason and Mike look at each other...then at the door. Instantly they lunge at it and grab the hinges and try to push it open. It doesn't budge.

MIKE  
No push it here.

JASON  
Hold on.

Jason pushes on it with all his might.

JASON (CONT'D)

Shit!

MIKE

Move out.

Mike turns around and starts kicking it. Still no use.

MIKE (CONT'D)

There's something on blocking it on the other side.

JASON

Here, let's both push it, we can get it.

Mike jumps up, grabs a flashlight from a shelf and heads to the lower area.

JASON (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

MIKE

Gonna find a way out of here.

JASON

There's nothing down there.

MIKE

That shit is jammed, I'm going down here.

LOWER AREA

Mike is on his hands and knees crawling through the cramped area. To his left are sewage pipes and to his right are storage boxes. He crawls ten feet and then looks around him.

UPPER AREA

Jason looks under to the lower area, trying to see Mike. He's starting to consider the idea.

JASON

Do you see anything?

LOWER AREA

Mike is shining his flashlight around the space. Deep under the house only provides more concrete walls.

MIKE

No. I figured it would be caved in or something but it looks like the foundation is solid.

UPPER AREA

Jason leans down to see him.

JASON

Head over there to your right. See if there's a way out back there.

LOWER AREA

Mike twists and turns on his stomach trying to get to his right. The boxes block his way and he tries to push past them.

MIKE

Jesus, what are these? Yearbooks?

The floor above him creaks and buckles after moving the boxes. Mike notices this but is too determined to let it stop him.

He moves forward just a few more feet and shines his light to the end of the crawl space.

Nothing.

UPPER AREA

Jason is on the edge of his seat.

JASON

Anything?

LOWER AREA

Mike uselessly searches the small area over and over.

MIKE

Nothing.

The floor above him makes a big creaking sound, this time Mike pays attention. He quickly turns around and starts army crawling back to the upper area.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I'm coming back.

JASON

Maybe you can crack through floor above you.

MIKE

No I'm coming back man, it's getting a little crazy down here.

A support beam cracks and topples on top of Mike's back. He screams.

UPPER AREA

Jason hears this, but doesn't understand the severity.

JASON

What the hell was that? Are you okay?

MIKE

No! Help!

Jason gets on his knees, ready to crawl but the floor above Mike collapses. It makes a huge roar as dust pours out and consumes Jason.

JASON

Mike! Mike!

No response.

He coughs and waves the dust out of his face and army crawls to Mike.

LOWER AREA

The tight crawl space is even tighter, but Mike's flashlight can be seen just 10 feet away. He crawls to Mike who is buried from the waste down. His face lies on the ground and he doesn't move.

JASON

Mikey! Ah shit, Mikey are you ok?

Mike coughs and lifts his hand, but is in too much pain to move around.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Jesus. Can you move? Mikey, are you okay buddy?

Mike keeps his face on the ground. He's in the worst pain of his life making his speech slurred.

MIKE  
Oh man, nope. I'm not okay, brother.

JASON  
Can you move?

MIKE  
No man, I'm in big trouble here.

JASON  
Hang on, let me get this shit off of you.

He grabs a large beam and tries to lift it. His position is awkward in the small space, but he gives it all his might.

It doesn't budge.

He lets go and surveys the area. There's nothing left to do.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Mike, I gotta pull you out.

Mike still can't lift his head.

MIKE  
Oh man, I don't know about that.

JASON  
We can do this buddy.

MIKE  
Just break open the hatch and get some help.

Jason grabs Mike's wrists and adjusts his stance to get some leverage.

JASON  
On the count of three...

MIKE  
Jason, man...please don't do this.

JASON

One...two...

He jerks Mike's wrists and pulls as hard as he can. Mike screams in agony and Jason does too.

Mike doesn't move at all. Jason tries again, pulling with all his might, as Mike cries in pure misery.

Jason gives up. He's on the verge of tears from putting his brother through such pain, but mostly for failing to save him.

MIKE

Jason, please stop.

JASON

I'm sorry Mikey, I'm gonna get some help.

He turns back to the upper area and army crawls as fast as he can.

UPPER AREA

Like a man possessed, Jason beats the shit out the door, trying to get it open. He pushes it, he pulls it, he punches it, he kicks it; nothing works.

He breaks down. He knows it's over.

LOWER AREA - LATER

Mike is able to move his head, but not much else. He sees Jason crawling towards him who has the look of someone trying to deliver bad news as gently as possible.

JASON

How you doing?

Even though he's crushed, Mike still has a trace of his smirk.

MIKE

Just chilling.

He coughs up some blood and spits it out, unaffected by it.

MIKE (CONT'D)

No luck?

Jason shakes his head, not forgiving himself.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Well what's the plan, Stan?

Jason leans up against the wall, making himself comfortable.

JASON

When did that broadcast say they were going to have another evacuation?

MIKE

They didn't.

Jason hoped he remember incorrectly. He sighs and his shoulders sink. After a moment he perks up.

JASON

Well, I guess we'll just have to catch the next one, huh?

Mike registers what Jason is saying and nods.

MIKE

Sounds like a good plan to me.

They sit for a moment, sadly. Then Mike lifts his fist for Jason. Jason smiles and gives Mike a fist bump.

FADE OUT: